Being a Sperm Donor: Masculinity, Sexuality, and Biosociality in Denmark by Sebastian Mohr

Each imagined guide begins with a preface about the profiled culture based on ethnographic fieldwork by the actual author that situates the guide's semifictional narrator, who is usually inspired by people in the society in which the author interacted. After an introduction to the narrator, the guide provides specific advice on pregnancy, birth, and rites of passage as well as general advice on how to enculturate a functioning member of that particular society.

The central argument of the book lies at the basic foundation of anthropology. There are certain human universals—pregnancy, birth, and the fact that babies must eat and sleep and are dependent on adults—but the rules that govern these practices of meeting babies' biological needs are far from universal. Instead, they are shaped by historic, economic, political, and social contexts, so that there is no one correct way to rear a child. Further, these practices are not unanimously agreed upon by all members of a culture. To illustrate this point, the editors use the example of where American babies should sleep. Should they cosleep with their parents? Sleep in the same room but in their own bed? Sleep in a different room of the house? Depends on whom you ask.

In a departure from the first edition, all the profiled societies are industrialized, navigating how to care for children against the backdrop of a rapidly changing, neoliberal, and post-9/11 world. Further, the largest proportion of the featured cultures practice Islam—Guinean Muslims in Portugal, Palestinian mothers in the West Bank, and Somalian mothers in Minnesota—a conscious decision on the part of the editors to "counter the essentialist Othering that occurs all too easily by non-Muslims" (29).

The book shows how childcare practices are shaped by poverty, conflict, xenophobia, racism, changing cultural norms, and migration. Over the eight chapters, readers learn of the difficulties and confusions around the continuation of the practice of female circumcision among Mandinka migrants to Portugal (Michelle C. Johnson), conflicting generational opinions over whether Chinese mothers should not shower or brush their teeth for a month after giving birth (Erin Raffety), how to explain violent attacks to your Israeli (Deborah Golden) and Palestinian (Bree Akesson) children, the importance of infant protection practices because of poverty-induced high infant mortality rates (Alma Gottlieb), how to maintain traditions in the face of rapid globalization (Kate Feinberg Robins and Mariah G. Schug), and the dangers of being a black male in the United States (Sirad Shirdon).

Although each childcare guide is written from the perspective of a member of a particular culture, the editors caution that it is meant to address not members of that society but outsider Western readers interested in learning about childcare practices in other places. However, given the profiled failings of incorporating cultural competence into Western biomedical cultural birth practices, pregnant Mandinka women living in Portugal and Somali refugees in Minnesota may want to consult their respective chapters and, if they agree with the cultural practices described within, offer the book to their obstetricians. Some of the chapters more readily lend themselves to the suspension of disbelief required to accept that the manual could have been written by a member of the profiled culture. The chapters by Gottlieb and Raffety make this leap more believable through the use of two narrators—a Beng grandmother and diviner for Gottlieb and a young Chinese mother and her mother-in-law for Raffety. Johnson also does this effectively through the positionality of a woman who emigrated to Portugal several years ago now offering advice to new migrants. Other chapters, like those on Somali refugees living in Minnesota and Faroe Islanders trying to preserve aspects of their culture despite increasing immigration, provide too much explication of the cultural logic underpinning childcare practices and not enough narration from a particular definable person.

This minor pedantic issue should not deter readers from this engaging book. *A World of Babies* is an approachable and creative presentation of ethnographic fieldwork in a compelling way. This makes it ideal for introductory courses in general and cultural anthropology as well as more advanced courses in gender and culture and child development. It may also be of interest to health care professionals working with families from the profiled societies and general readers who wish to learn more about how children in other cultures are reared.

Being a Sperm Donor: Masculinity, Sexuality, and Biosociality in Denmark. *Sebastian Mohr.* Oxford: Berghahn, 2018. 216 pp.

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Being a sperm donor is not just about donating semen once or twice a week; it is a process of moral and gendered becoming. Such is Sebastian Mohr's claim in his careful and engaging ethnography. Being a sperm donor in contemporary Denmark is a microcosm of what it means to be a man in a biomedical, biopolitical day and age. The subtleties of mundane experiences of sperm donation reveal how profoundly formative this process of biosocial subjectivation, to use Mohr's term, can be. The routines of donation and the everyday dynamics of sperm banks require men who donate sperm to think of themselves and their social relations in terms of biosociality, which refers to the self and its constituting social relations as being embedded in various biopolitical practices and discourses.

Sperm donation goes against three long-standing Euro-American social taboos: masturbation, infidelity, and multilineal kinship. In addition to the weight of historical stigmatization, masturbation often means that men spend time with pornographic images and the fantasies emerging from these images, which can be perceived as a threat to their real-world sexual partners. Because sperm donation makes children and because of the enabling technologies of DNA testing, men who donate sperm expose themselves and their families to uncertain kinship relations that will persist beyond their lifetimes. Moreover, sperm donation requires donors to submit themselves to uncomfortable biomedical scrutiny and follow an ejaculatory regimen that can interfere with their personal and sexual lives (due to a waiting period of 48 to 72 hours before each donation during which they cannot ejaculate). Yet the multinational enterprise of assistive reproductive technology relies on large numbers of men willingly participating. Why do they do it?

Sperm donation is, according to Mohr, an "enticement of gender" (16) that allows heterosexual men to perform masculinity in ways that make them feel good about themselves (Danish regulations prohibit donations from men who have sex with men). He develops this positive, desirous form of self-making as a way that people create and recognize themselves as normatively gendered in contemporary societies. Mohr uses the term *biosocial subjectivation* to frame this kind of masculine performance in order to critique the academic literature about biosociality, biomedicalization, biopolitics, and biological citizenship that often implies top-down scientific and regulatory control. Yet biological subjectivation involves buy-in from people who use such processes to enhance their capacities and sense of self-worth in meaningful ways. Sperm donation is based on an affective economy that allows donors to make themselves into recognizably virtuous men using situations of biosociality.

The first of the book's five chapters sets out the conceptual basis for biosocial subjectivation, engaging with the literature mentioned above as well as queer and feminist theory. In the second chapter, Mohr lays out the moral questions that sperm donation raises and how donors negotiate their place as responsible, gendered subjects of a particular moral order. They fulfill the roles of responsible fathers, loving sons, and caring husbands not simply in spite of sperm donation but by using it—for example, by capably managing the sexual expectations of their partners alongside regulations on ejaculation, by taking action to protect their children from unwanted kinship claims, or by honoring deceased parents' valuation of children.

Chapter 3 delves into the affective investments of sperm donation, focusing on men's experiences of masturbating at sperm banks. To effectively donate sperm, they must learn to excite and stimulate themselves in particular ways and contexts, on demand, and as part of an ejaculatory regimen that can last for years (donors are expected to commit to an extended period of regular donation to make the initial intake process worthwhile). They incorporate such control as part of competent gender performance. Chapter 4 untangles how donors think about relatedness and kinship in relation both to their own families and to donation recipients and donor-conceived individuals. Mohr argues that responsibility is key in either case—in the former through protecting their families from unwelcome kinship claims, in the latter by ensuring their own health and honest submission to biomedical regimens. Donors did not consider children conceived using their sperm to be kin, but many did feel obligated beyond maintaining their own health and therefore chose not to be anonymous in case a child eventually wanted to contact them.

The fifth chapter, which I found to be the most interesting, deals with the limits of biosocial subjectivation. Mohr shows how unpleasant affects, namely shame and disgust, mark the boundaries of sperm donation as a way of crafting masculine subjectivity. Opportunities for shame and disgust abound: for example, nude medical examinations including scrutiny of genitals and anus, quantification of reproductive and biomedical health metrics, submission to questions about and control over one's sexual life, masturbation in a public space and task-oriented manner while being very close to other men's masturbation and semen. Such moments mark sperm donation's limits because if the unpleasant experiences become too prominent men will stop donating, yet they also create the conditions for the enticement of gender that motivates men to overcome this unpleasantness in the first place. Shameful limits are what allow succeeding at masculinity to be so rewarding. To be proud of having high sperm counts that may father lots of children requires submitting to testing that may announce reproductive inferiority; to successfully manage competing masculine responsibilities is shadowed by feeling morally incapable while struggling to balance them. Sperm donation is a continuous transgressive experience that has both appealing and off-putting aspects that both reinforce and undermine normative gender performativity.

Mohr's research involved extensive participant-observation and nearly 30 interviews with men from very different backgrounds involved in sperm donation. His book is full of important reflections on the fieldwork experience: how it implicated his own masculinity and feelings, the effects of interviews from the donors' perspectives (including how they challenged or reinforced more subtle enticements of gender), and sensory details. Mohr has a refreshingly frank way of exploring the theoretically interesting aspects of masturbation and gendered affects, and frequent quotations from his interviews and field notes lend richness to his somewhat repetitive though

meticulous text. He is careful not to generalize, and he makes use of outliers and opposite tendencies in his findings to emphasize that he is making truth claims not about what sperm donors are but, rather, about the processes in which they must engage. Sperm donation combines technical simplicity with moral complexity, giving it an "(extra)ordinariness" (3) exemplified in how the daily life of donors weaves together gendered, sexual norms of contemporary social life with the transgressive novelties of reproductive biomedicine "in a seemingly unproblematic fashion" (15). This book beautifully captures that paradox.

Garbage Citizenship: Vital Infrastructures of Labor in Dakar, Senegal. *Rosalind Fredericks.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018. 212 pp.

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Garbage Citizenship is an engaging study of garbage infrastructure in Senegal's capital that foregrounds both the human labor it takes to keep the city clean and the ways that failures to do so become goads to political action. Among the political actors appearing on the book's pages are a youth movement that seeks to rid the city of dirt in order to rid the country of moral disorder, a community-based NGO-led waste project that employs local women as part-time waste workers, and a protest organized by the main trash workers' union. Rosalind Fredericks gives a composite picture of infrastructure as a vital political terrain far greater than the technical expertise that overtly defines it. This is a terrain shaped by poststructural adjustment austerity that led to experimentations with labor conditions and subsequent protests as Dakar's garbage workers fought for better contracts by emphasizing Islam's ecological message and forging alliances with residents fed up with government fecklessness.

Infrastructure in African contexts often requires some readjustment of perspectives to understand how its fragmentations are stitched together by residents' spontaneous solutions. In most neighborhoods in Dakar, there is no regular garbage service. No trucks appear to empty cans on a given day. Denser neighborhoods are hard to access. Most of the waste is organic, which in the tropical climate translates into noxious decomposition. Garbage workers and residents alike engage in what Fredericks calls salvage bricolage to upend the infrastructure's shortcomings through tinkering with deficient technologies and creating strategies of managing trash despite infrequent disposal. A female homemaker explained to Fredericks what this entails in practice: "On the first day [when the truck is not coming], we separate out the rice, vegetables, and banana peels and feed these to the goat" (87). But Fredericks and her interlocutors do not settle for the bricolage. Rather, what lies at the heart of the book is an admonishment by a municipal official she interviews: "Yes, infrastructure is power, and what matters most is choosing the *right* infrastructure" (152).

To reveal how much infrastructure is a matter of choice, even in a resource-strapped urban context like Dakar, Fredericks begins by tracing changing governance agendas and their reconfigurations of labor over five decades. She describes the transition from the relatively well-funded infrastructures of the postindependence era to austerity measures after Senegal became one of the first recipients of structural adjustment loans from the World Bank in 1979. The imposed cuts to public spending meant that garbage workers were laid off. In response, a spontaneous youth social movement organized to clean the city of piling garbage left by protesting workers. The Set/Setal ("Be Clean/Make Clean" in Wolof) emerged out of youth sports groups. Young men and women took to cleaning the streets, painted educational murals, and worked to rid neighborhoods of tobacco, alcohol, prostitution, and violence. The youth, Fredericks argues, were actively reshaping their collective identity as a solution to the city's future rather than as its unemployed problem. Soon after the movement's creation, the city's newly elected mayor, Mamadou Diop, channeled this youthful fervor to manage garbage infrastructure at low cost. Former activists now turned into underpaid workers.

For Fredericks, austerity means a reconfiguration of "the relationship between the body, infrastructure, and the city" (62). In neoliberal Dakar, the volunteers turned waste workers had to bear the brunt of the disrepair of the infrastructure on their bodies. As salvage bricoleurs, they operated old vehicles, handled waste without protective gear, and tried to avoid injuries because they received no medical insurance. In addition, the Set/Setal's discourse of dedication to community work was hijacked by the municipal authorities to organize public infrastructure as if it was a voluntary movement.

As public infrastructure in neoliberal Dakar became more and more underinvested, NGOs stepped in to fill the gaps. Fredericks dedicates a chapter, "Technologies of Community," to an almost caricature-sounding NGO project that was set up to provide an off-grid, low-tech, neighborhood-based garbage collection system in Dakar's district of Yoff. The project in question employed women for symbolic wages to collect trash using horse-drawn carts and to police whether community members paid user fees for participating in the system. The choice of women as the appropriate workers naturalized them as solely responsible for household garbage, while their own adherence to the community meant their work could be cast not as labor but as a fulfillment of responsibility for the community. The